

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY SITES AGRO-TERRORISM AS TOP
PRIORITY FOR UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Broad Agency Announcement Issued to Establish Two Additional Centers of Excellence

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced today the release of a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) calling for proposals that will focus on research efforts to combat agro-terrorism. The notice, which is available on the DHS web site at: www.dhs.gov under the "Research & Technology" tab and at www.grants.gov, invites colleges and universities to submit letters of intent by January 5, 2004, followed by full proposals, due on February 9, 2004.

"Secretary Ridge and I are delighted that we are taking this important step to expand Homeland Security's partnership with academia," said Dr. Charles McQueary, Under Secretary, Science and Technology. "By empowering the best scientific minds at our nation's universities to tackle the challenges of agro-terrorism, I feel confident that we can help ensure the bio-security and safety of the nation's food supply."

The proposal submission is the first step in the review process for academic institutions wishing to be selected as a Homeland Security Center of Excellence (HS-Center). Homeland Security will convene a team of expert external evaluators who will review the submissions based on merit and make recommendations to a selection committee within the Department. Following selected site visits, the Department anticipates establishing two HS-Centers by April 2004; one will focus on combating animal related agro-terrorism and the other will focus on post-harvest food security.

"We look forward to receiving responses to this solicitation from colleges and universities and selected partners across the nation," said Dr. Melvin Bernstein, Director of University Programs. "We are particularly interested in receiving proposals in the area of foreign animal diseases and on issues related to food contamination, primarily deliberate acts."

In November 2003, the University of Southern California, partnering with the University of Wisconsin at Madison, New York University and the University of California at Berkeley, was chosen to house the first HS-Center, known as the Homeland Security Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events. In 2004 the Department plans to establish a number of additional HS-Centers across a number of short- and long-range research and development areas.

The HS-Centers program, which is operated by the Department's Science and Technology division, establishes university-based centers of multi-disciplinary research where areas critical to homeland security can be analyzed, debated and shared. Through this program, Homeland Security and partner universities will bring together the nation's best experts and focus its most talented researchers on a variety of threats that include chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological, explosive and cyber terrorism.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology division serves as the primary research and development arm of the Department, utilizing our nation's scientific and technological resources to provide federal, state and local officials with the technology and capabilities to protect the homeland.

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